



Editorial

No fundamental change from the May 10 elections

Under the present semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system, elections are reactionary and only create the illusion of democracy. They can never become a means of expressing the people's will or selecting leaders that can truly represent their interests.

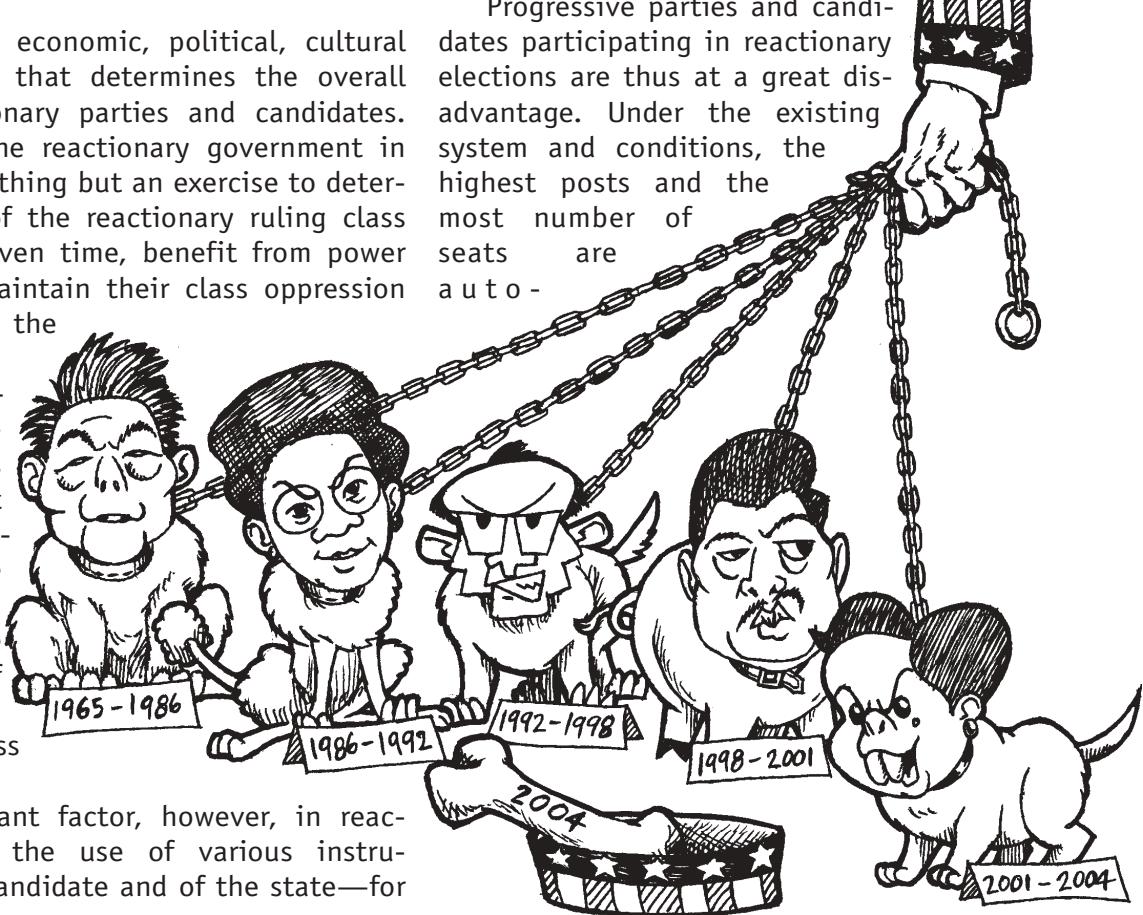
It is the existing economic, political, cultural and electoral system that determines the overall dominance of reactionary parties and candidates. Thus, elections for the reactionary government in the Philippines are nothing but an exercise to determine which faction of the reactionary ruling class will prevail at any given time, benefit from power and safeguard and maintain their class oppression and exploitation of the people.

To attract the people's votes, reactionary candidates make various populist and reformist promises, utilize the culture of feudal patronage, cook up and pay large sums for all sorts of advertisements and gimmicks in the mass media.

The most significant factor, however, in reactionary elections is the use of various instruments—both of the candidate and of the state—for

coercion and deception, the use of large campaign funds and vote-buying, and the capacity to manipulate the election results. The use of guns, goons and gold is the decisive element in the outcome of elections in the Philippines.

Progressive parties and candidates participating in reactionary elections are thus at a great disadvantage. Under the existing system and conditions, the highest posts and the most number of seats are auto-



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of this issue...**

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progressive parties

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Collection of NPA photo-
graphs

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Bandits used by AFP
in NE Mindanao

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matically allotted to representatives of the ruling classes. Only a few progressive parties and candidates are allowed to win in elections.

In particular, the law on party-lists only sets aside 20% of congressional seats for small parties not included among the five major political parties. Because of the limited niche allotted for these groups, it would be impossible for them to become decisive in enacting or repealing laws. In addition, a large number of those vying for the party-list election are mere extensions of large political parties, military associations, economic groups and other instruments of the reactionary ruling classes.

Aside from this, progressive parties and candidates are victims of fascist violence. In the over 50 years' history of the puppet republic, attacks by the fascist forces of the state and ultra-reactionary political groups have been most vicious and violent whenever progressives make significant advances in reactionary elections. During the 1987 election, it was the progressive Partido ng Bayan

that bore the brunt of killings, injuries and harassment.

At present, the militarists in government and other fascists are concentrating their repression on progressive parties and candidates. The most numerous victims of murder and mayhem in the present election come from Bayan Muna, Anakpawis and Anak ng Bayan. The fascists and ultra-reactionaries are afraid of the relatively large number of votes that these parties are expected to garner in the election. All of the major surveys have predicted them to win 10 up to 12 seats in congress.

The participation of progressives in reactionary elections, however, is still beneficial despite the tremendous odds and dangers that they face and the limitations to what they can accomplish through electoral struggle and working inside government. One thing they can do at the least is to expose the rottenness of the system and defend the people's national and democratic rights.

The Party establishes links and forges alliances with progressives and takes advantage of contradic-

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tions among the reactionaries that are heightened during elections. In forging such a united front, the Party's main concern is to advance the interests of, and acquire advantages for, the revolutionary movement, the revolutionary mass base and the mass movement that it leads.

Nevertheless, the inutility of the reactionary political and electoral system and the criminal campaign of attacking progressives expose the real rotten and reactionary character of the ruling system and its electoral process. Nothing can be expected of them by way of resolving the people's basic problems or achieving any meaningful social change.

In the face of all this, we must further our antifascist propaganda efforts and protests, and persevere along the path of protracted people's war, even as we confront head-on the complex and arduous task of advancing the open democratic movement and our work within reactionary institutions.

It is only through armed revolution that we can overthrow the rotten neocolonial and semifeudal order, establish a new and revolutionary order and realize national freedom, democracy and progress towards the greater advance of Philippine society.

AB

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Suppressing progressive parties

A relentless campaign of slander and murder

At the initiative of the cleric-co-fascist Norberto Gonzales, Malacañang national security adviser and US intelligence agent, the fascist government and the Armed Forces of the Philippines launched an active and intense campaign this April to malign progressive parties and candidates, signalling the escalation of violence and repression against them.

Following are some of the more prominent cases from April 9 to May 3:

►The PNP maliciously spread the lie that Anakpawis has links with the New People's Army (NPA) because of a proliferation of Anakpawis posters in Alang-alang, Leyte where they were supposedly ambushed by the NPA on May 3. The PNP was obviously groping for anything to justify its attack on Anakpawis. In a statement, the Efren Martires Command of the NPA in Eastern Visayas said that the NPA did not even figure in any encounter on the date and place mentioned.

►PAMALAKAYA-Quezon vice-president and Bayan Muna campaigner Rogelio Perez, 46, and his wife Cristina, 52, secretary general of Bayan Muna-Pagbilao, were shot on the night of April 29 in Barangay Silangang Malicboy, Pagbilao, Quezon. Rogelio died instantly while Cristina was in critical condition when she was brought to a hospital. The couple had just come from a meeting. That same day, Bayan Muna member Juland Cautasan had also been shot and killed outside a school in Pagbilao.

►Bullets rained on Anakpawis-Mindoro Oriental secretary general

Isaias Mañano Jr., 23, in Barangay Pachoca, Calapan City, Mindoro Oriental on the night of April 28. Mañano was killed while his companion, Anakpawis vice-president Guillermo Coz, 47, was wounded.

►Soldiers of the 78th IB shot at and killed Charlie Mandaya Davao, Ganadi Pinamaylan and Charlie Utak, Ata-Manobo tribesmen and members of Bayan Muna, while they were eating in a restaurant in the town center of Laac, Compostela Valley on April 24. The military accused the three men of being NPA members.

►The military abducted Oliver Ostoral, 27, of Mauban, Quezon and Ramil Adornado, 19, of Real, Quezon, on April 25. Both members of Anak ng Bayan-Southern Tagalog, they were last seen at 6 a.m. of April 25 in Barangay Mangilang, Candelaria, Quezon. Ostoral and Adornado were in the area to invite people to the Bayan Muna-Quezon convention.

►In Camarines Sur, 25 members of Anakpawis and Bayan Muna have been abducted and remain missing since the intensification of military operations in the towns of Tinambac, Lagonoy, Goa, Presentacion, Caramoan and Gar-chitoren. Anak ng Bayan-Bicol also reported four cases of murder. Two of the victims were Virgie Vetmen, 19, a member of Anakpawis and Jesus Bongalon, a barangay councilor of Payak, Bato, Camarines Sur. Vetmen was raped before being killed and

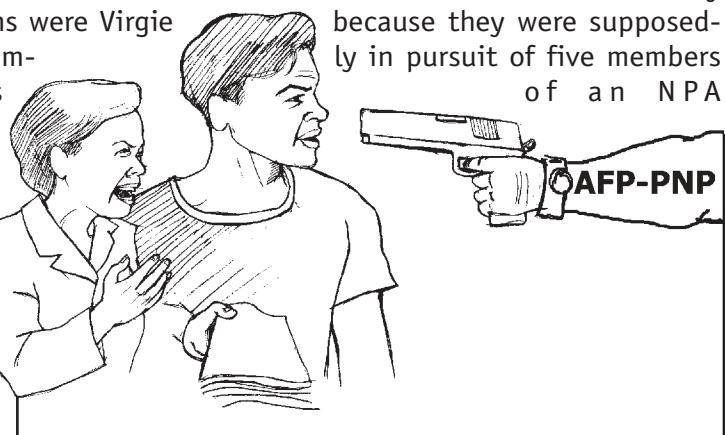
her body mutilated.

►Elements of the PNP in Dumaguete City illegally arrested Anak ng Bayan nominee Ronald Ian Evidente on April 21. He was implicated in the ambush and killing of certain members of the bandit group Revolutionary Proletarian Army (RPA).

►In Davao Oriental, elements of the 72nd IB together with the Special Forces and PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group distributed handbills branding progressive parties as "children of Satan."

►A soldier poked a gun at Apolinario Alvarez, president and leading nominee of Anak ng Bayan as he negotiated with elements of the 42nd IB who blocked their motorcade in Tigaon, Camarines Sur on April 18. The motorcade was part of a five-day peace caravan that toured four provinces of Bicol. Meanwhile, Anak ng Bayan member Leo del Rosario was mauled by a soldier.

►Some 100 elements of the 803rd Infantry Brigade and the PNP of Catarman, Samar in full battle gear surrounded the Bayan Muna office in Sitio Bukhasan, Barangay Cawayan, Catarman on the night of April 13. They tried to enter the office forcibly because they were supposedly in pursuit of five members of an NPA



"sparrow unit". The BM staff refused to let them in because the military and police failed to show any warrant. The fascist troops were forced to withdraw after two hours.

►Nine drunken soldiers of the 78th IB surrounded members of Anakpawis and Bayan Muna in Danao City, Cebu on April 14. According to Anakpawis-Central Visayas president Glemar Bacusmo and Bayan Muna organizer Magilda Abella, they were stopped from campaigning in Barangay Santican by the 78th IB troops. The military confiscated their propaganda materials.

►A soldier on motorcycle dragged Ronalyn Olea, president of the College Editors' Guild of the Philippines and a nominee of Anak ng Bayan in Angeles City on April 9. She was on her way home from the Anak ng Bayan office in the city. Olea was hospitalized for over a week due to scratches, wounds and bruises she sustained in various parts of her body.

The fascists are relentlessly violating and trying to undermine the legality of open democratic organizations and parties in order to justify the violence and repression inflicted on progressives. We must continuously expose and assail such violence as a sign of desperation among the reactionaries whenever revolutionaries and progressives register advances in any field of struggle and whenever reactionaries feel there is a grave threat to their interests.

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US imperialism intervenes in the elections

Up to 120 agents of US imperialism are presently in the Philippines purportedly to monitor the May 10 election—a form of direct intervention in the Philippines' internal affairs. Aside from US Embassy personnel, many of the supposed monitors are from the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDIA), an institution controlled by the Right-wing AFL-CIO, an American labor federation. Many are also from the International Republican Institute (IRI) controlled by the Republican Party of US President Bush.

These ultra-Right institutions are used as conduits of funds from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which is controlled by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and used for the US' intervention in various countries. Through the NED, the CIA funded organizations in Haiti to overthrow Pres. Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The US is also funneling funds through them to organizations launching opposition rallies against Hugo Chavez, Venezuela's anti-imperialist president.

The entry of the "US monitoring team" into the Philippines has a sinister objective. US imperialism will use its intervention in the May 10 election to ensure an orderly contest among puppet politicians and prevent a possible flareup of chaos after the election. The US is likewise concerned about the possible victory of a significant number of progressive parties in the election.

NPA disarms candidates who violated PTC

The NPA seized 11 firearms from four candidates and their armed bodyguards in four separate disarming operations between April 13 and 25.

The NPA stopped a mayoral candidate in Maayon, Capiz and seized his firearms on April 25 when he ignored reminders from the NPA Nonito Aguirre Sr. Command against bringing armed bodyguards into the guerrilla zones. He, along with another candidate without a permit-to-campaign (PTC), was intercepted at a checkpoint by Red fighters in Barangay Bungbungan, Maayon. Confiscated from his bodyguards were a Galil rifle and an Uzi machine pistol.

On April 19, Mayor Eduardo Balaod, a reelectionist in Tambulig, Zamboanga del Sur, was about to return home when he was intercepted at an NPA checkpoint in Barangay Upper Leyson. Because of his flagrant violation of the PTC policy, Red fighters of the Front Monterosa Command confiscated the weapons of his four police escorts and private bodyguards. The NPA seized two M16s, two 9 mm pistols and a .45 caliber pistol.

In the Caraga region, the NPA confiscated firearms from the mayor of Loreto, Agusan del Sur and his bodyguards on April 21. The NPA guerrillas under Front Committee 34 blocked the mayor and his bodyguards composed of two soldiers, two policemen and a CAFGU element in Sitio Budiangan, Barangay Kauswagan, Loreto. Seized from them were three M16s, an Ingram machine pistol, a .45 caliber pistol and a shotgun.

Prior to this, Red fighters under the Ka Bob Ruiz Command confiscated two .38 revolvers on April 13 from the two police escorts of mayoral candidate Armando Lunio in Sitio Greenfield, Barangay Sta. Juana, Tagbina, Surigao del Sur.

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Collection of NPA photographs launched

The book *Pulang Mandirigma: Images of the New People's Army*, a collection of various NPA photographs, was released on April 30 at the Balay Kalinaw, University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. The book is but the third of its kind, and the first in fifteen years.

National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), negotiating panel member Comrade Coni Ledesma spoke about the significance of the book. By showing the daily activities of the Red fighters in the service of the country and in upholding Red political power, she said, the book strongly belies the black propaganda that the New People's Army is a terrorist organization.

Communist Party of the Philippines spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal called to officially inaugurate the book published by the CPP Information Bureau. Ka Roger took the opportunity to expose the terrorism of the reactionary Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and assail AFP abuses in Quezon, Mindoro and Rizal.

A short program was held featuring songs and messages of sol-

idarity from activists, including the local chapter of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS). There was also a small exhibit of selected images from the book and creative art from the guerrilla zones.

The book launching was accomplished with the help of the Congress of Teachers and Educators for Nationalism and Democracy. (CONTEND).

Putting the book together

As was stated by Ka Roger in the book's foreword, comrades enthusiastically supported the effort to put the book together. Comrades from all over the country positively responded to the call to send in photographs or to invite photographers to take pictures. Orders for over 1,000 copies of the book were already placed even before its release.

Up to 10,000 photographs were compiled. Most of them were contributed by comrades in the guerrilla fronts using their respective analog or digital cameras or even the cameras of their cell-phones. Meanwhile, several hundred pictures were contributed by professional photographers from their special visits to the guerrilla zones in preparation for the book or from previous shots. Several hundred were also drawn from the collection of pictures of *Liberation*, the NDFP's official publication.

Comrades enthusiastically supported the effort to put the book together. Comrades from all over the country positively responded to the call to send in photographs or to invite photographers to take pictures. Up to 10,000 photographs were compiled.



Comrade Connie Ledesma at the book launching

In putting the book together, the conditions of people's war were taken into account. Intense military operations forced the cancellation of some visits by photographers. Other times, their return trips were delayed. Photographs were carefully chosen in order not to endanger the security of the masses and the comrades in the guerrilla zones.

Those who are able to look closely at the 125 black-and-white photographs contained in the 150 pages of this 8" by 8" book are afforded an incomparable glimpse into the daily lives of Red fighters. As Ka Roger has stated: "(The book) shows the breadth of activities of the NPA: crossing fields, mountains and the heart of forests to travel from one barrio to the next; the masses offering their homes; the enthusiastic greetings and steaming hot coffee welcoming the comrades; the Red fighters as students and teachers, friends and advisers, cooks and bakers, dentists and medics, fighters and partners in the people's struggle."

AB

Repudiate those who exploit the OPML to relentlessly malign the Party! – Ka Basil

The following article is drawn from the deathbed statement of Comrade Mabini Permalu Fabon, better known as Ka Basil in Southern Tagalog. He had been gravely ill for two days when he wrote this statement. Despite his sufferings, he persisted on writing and sending it to Ang Bayan to respond to the traitors who were exploiting errors which had already been rectified in their relentless bid to malign the Party. On February 6, after six days of suffering from a serious ailment, he passed away and was proclaimed a hero of the Philippine revolution.

Ka Basil began his statement by directly naming the criminal ringleaders of Oplan Missing Link (OPML), the baseless and hysterical witch hunt within the Party in Southern Tagalog that took place in 1988. The principal ringleader was the then regional committee secretary Miel Laurenaria (also known as Tibs or Amanda). Ka Basil recalled Laurenaria's fits of irrationality that he witnessed. "She allowed the arrest and torture of comrades, including members of the regional committee that had just been elected by the Party conference in the region." Ka Basil was one of the members of her collective in the regional committee ordered arrested by Laurenaria.

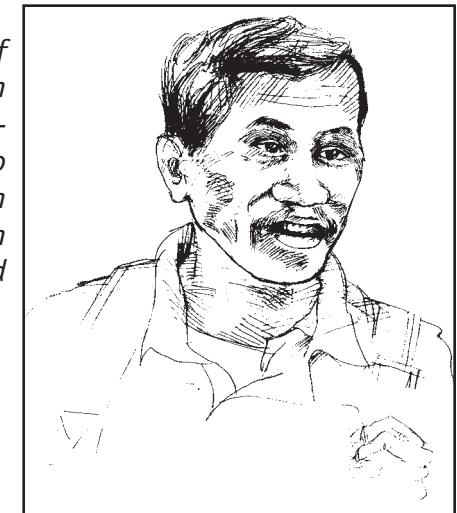
He also named the other leading cadres who held high positions. He admired and praised them for humbly submitting to disciplinary action from the Party, remaining loyal to the revolution, showing complete remorse and rectifying.

On the other hand, he intensely detested the others, especially Laurenaria, because she refused to recognize her own errors, merely pretended to accept disciplinary action, and in other instances insisted on the correctness of

OPML. Towards the end of the Second Great Rectification Movement (SGRM), Laurenaria completely betrayed the Party and the revolutionary movement and joined the "MLPP-RHB" (Marxist-Leninist Party of the Philippines-Rebolusyonaryong Hukbong Bayan). This group has no right to call itself as such because it desecrates Marxism, Leninism, the revolution and the people. This group colludes with and allows itself to be used by the reactionary forces and military; serves as a paid private army of rotten and fascist politicians; attacks the Party, people's army and the revolutionary movement; sows deception and confusion; and inflicts cruelty on the masses.

Likewise, he detested those who led Task Force Missing Link, the unit that carried out OPML in Southern Tagalog. Principal among them is Kenny, the head of TFML, who evaded accountability and bolted the Party after the CPP put a stop to and declared OPML to be a grave error.

Among his fellow victims, Ka Basil expressed his extreme disgust at Manuel Quiambao Peña (better known by the name Taning). He knew that Peña was one of those most intensely tor-



tured in OPML. On the other hand, it was clear to Peña and many other victims of OPML that such acts were contrary to the principles and policies of the Party, the New People's Army and the revolutionary movement.

Peña and all of the other victims of OPML who were rescued personally witnessed the Party central leadership's timely and decisive intervention in the latter months of 1988 to investigate, put a halt to and declare the OPML a big error and devoid of basis. They were also witness to the imposition of disciplinary action against its ringleaders based on the gravity of their violations of the policies and guidelines of the Party, people's army and revolutionary movement, and of the rights of comrades. Likewise, they witnessed the rectification of the errors of OPML and other similar anti-infiltration hysteria.

In reality, however, the bigger and more basic issue with "Taning" was his obsession with NGOism and other examples of serious disorientation which

gravely damaged the Party and the revolutionary movement in the 1980s. As he wallowed in NGOism, he ended up collaborating with the state and other traitors in attacking the Party and the revolutionary movement. For this, he focuses on the errors of OPML and other anti-infiltration hysteria in the 1980s which have already been rectified.

It is ironic that Peña now treads the same path as the criminal ringleaders of OPML, other similar anti-infiltration hysteria and other grave errors who refused to rectify and therefore have either been expelled or have separated themselves from the Party. They have all refused to accept the fact that the SGRM has rectified the broader errors of the 1980s. They have all chosen to continue wallowing in the grave disorientation that the Party has decisively repudiated and abandoned. They all fight the Party and the revolutionary movement instead of the reactionary ruling classes and the state.

Together with Robert "Bobby" Garcia, another OPML victim who incessantly blames the Party instead of the erring ringleaders of OPML, Peña's current life's mission is to search continuously for opportunities and means of reviving the OPML issue, portray it as the handiwork of the Party and as something inherent in the Party and in Marxism-Leninism, and use it to attack and to attempt to destroy the Party.

Peña has long been looking for anyone he could goad into coming up with a version of OPML's events that hews to their wishes and anti-communist objectives. "I remember in 1999 when I visited Peña's office in Cubao, he was trying to convince me to disclose the cruelty and wrongdoing that

attended OPML and have the accounts published in the *Inquirer*, as I was allegedly one of its victims." They had agreed with someone in the paper to use OPML to malign the Party.

Even then, Basil resisted Peña's efforts to provoke him, as well as a similar request from "Bobby" Garcia, who also approached him at this time. Ka

Ka Basil was one of those who experienced the worst physical torture and hardships in OPML, but at no time did he lose his comradely attitude towards those who committed errors and made all-out rectification and remained loyal to the Party and the revolution.

Basil was thoroughly convinced that Peña and Garcia's sinister motives would not do any good to the Party, the revolutionary movement and even the OPML victims themselves. Said Ka Basil: "Their plans would only provide the enemy with disparaging information. What they are doing and what they are trying to deceive the victims into doing are no different from the anticommunist and counterrevolutionary black propaganda and Red scare tactics that the reactionary state already carries out." They collaborate with the most active traitors against the Party and the revolution, the counterrevolutionary, pseudo-reformists and agents of the reactionary government and military. Certain front institutions and intelligence agencies of the US and puppet government fund

the institutions that they use, the publications that they put out, and the activities that they hold.

Ka Basil strongly condemned Peña and Garcia's destructive maneuvers and intrigues. "Instead of focusing the blame on the traitors and criminals who initiated the anti-infiltration hysteria and errors such as Laurenaria, Ricardo Reyes who approved Kampanyang Ahos—the earlier version of OPML in Mindanao, Arturo Tabara who launched and personally tortured and abused those who were victimized in the Visayas, and Nilo de la Cruz who together with Popoy Lagman led a similar anti-infiltration hysteria in Metro Manila, they preferred to collude with the enemy and together chose to aim their guns at the Party and the revolutionary movement."

Ka Basil was one of those who experienced the worst physical torture and hardships in OPML, but at no time did he lose his comradely attitude towards those who committed errors and made all-out rectification and remained loyal to the Party and the revolution. He reserved his anger and hatred for the ringleaders who showed no remorse and those who completely betrayed the Party as well as a few victims who let themselves be used by the enemy.

In continuing to spread lies, distortions of fact and twisted conclusions on the OPML, said Ka Basil, the traitors prove that they are special enemy agents and paid anti-Party propagandists. In conclusion, Ka Basil called on his fellow victims and the families of the victims to repudiate the likes of Peña and Garcia who serve nothing but malicious ruling class propaganda against the Party and the revolutionary movement. AB



AFP utilizes bandits in Northeastern Mindanao

The Philippine Army 4th ID and the Philippine National Police (PNP) systematically use bandits in Northeastern Mindanao to spread counterrevolutionary terror among the people and malign the NPA. The AFP and the police usually order the bandits they coddle to target thriving retail cooperatives set up by lumad mass organizations in highland villages. They also rob some businessmen and passenger vehicles.

Whenever robberies are reported to the police, the PNP has only one thing to say: it is NPA guerrillas who carried out the holdups. The police immediately tell the bandits to surrender and pose as Red fighters.

In a statement, NDF-Northeastern Mindanao spokesperson Ka Maria Malaya denounced the terror being unleashed by the bandits and the big disruptions they create in the masses' livelihood. She said that the lumad are forced to guard their cooperatives and individual properties instead of tending to their farms. Rather than pursue the bandits who are a bane to the masses, the AFP and PNP tell the people to join the CAFGU, set up AFP and CAFGU detachments in their areas, and allow the intensification of military operations to put an end to disorder. The people refuse because they know that it is all a ruse to enable the military to unleash terror more freely and launch large-scale operations to destroy the revolutionary movement.

Malaya cited a break-in in the second week of April at a lumad retail cooperative in the uplands of Diatagon, Lianga, Surigao del Sur. Prior to this, five peasants had been robbed and massacred in Cabadbaran, Agusan del Sur on December 1, 2003 after a series of robberies and massacres in the barrios of Butuan City and San Antonio, Agusan del Norte and in Cabadbaran in November 2003. On February 27, a retail cooperative in Sitio Sinaka, Antikala, Butuan City was also broken into but the people were able to prevent the retail cooperative in the tribal sitio in Kalidan, Mahaba, Cabadbaran from being robbed.

The perpetrator of this series of crimes is an eight-man lumad group controlled by Sgt. Marlito Boholps of the AFP-CAFGU detachment in Mahayahay, Antikala, Butuan City. The group is led by Loley Mandag, an active asset of Boholps. In March 2004, the bandits were made to pose as Red fighters who supposedly surrendered in the 401st Bde camp in New Leyte, Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur.

The AFP recruits lumad tribesmen to become bandits to destroy the unity of the lumad people. One four-man bandit group is led by Peter Iligan, a Manobo from Poblacion 1, Santiago, Agusan del Norte and an asset of Santiago police chief Heros Morales. Another group that operates along the Surigao del Sur, Agusan del Norte and Agusan del Sur border is led by Jack Anilao and Junior Ampo, members of the Lumadnong



Pakigbisog sa Caraga or Lupaca, a counterrevolutionary group set up by Gen. Ernesto Carolina, former AFP Southern Command chief. Anilao's group was also made to pose as NPA and surrender.

Malaya explained that the revolutionary movement strives to disband these bandit groups by punishing their leaders and conducting all-out reeducation among ordinary members who have committed no grave crimes against the masses. The NPA and the lumad are partners in fighting these bandits.

Malaya also called on the people, both in the uplands and plains areas, to strengthen the NPA in order to defend the gains of the people and the revolution and unite against the bandits coddled by the AFP and PNP. **AB**



Cordillera Day 2004

Celebrating a history of heroic struggle in the Cordillera

Those who attended Cordillera Day 2004 militantly celebrated the valiant history and the unrelenting and intense struggle of the national minorities and people of the Cordillera.

The celebration was held in Tocucan, Bontoc, Mt. Province on April 24. Over 3,000 people from various *ili* (communities) in the Cordillera, representatives of national minorities and other sectors nationwide, as well as allies and friends from within and outside the Philippines attended.

Cordillera Day began as the Macliing Memorial—the commemoration of the murder of Ama Macliing Dulag by elements of the Armed Forces of the Philippines on April 24, 1980. Macliing was a respected Kalinga *pangat* (tribal chief) who, until his death, heroically opposed the construction of the Chico River Basin Hydroelectric Project (Chico Dam projects) during the US-Marcos dictatorship. The Macliing Memorial was held from 1981-1984, first as an annual commemoration by the Kalinga and Bontoc tribes of Macliing's struggle and martyrdom. Other Cordillera tribes joined the activity until it encompassed various sectors and areas in the Cordillera and included even non-minorities.

Since 1985, the celebrations have been called Cordillera Day (CD) to commemorate and affirm the continuing and more encompassing militant struggle of the people not only along the Chico River but in the entire Cordillera against class and national oppres-

sion. CD also embraces the issues and struggles of certain areas in the Ilocos region, which lies adjacent to the Cordillera.

The theme of this year's celebration was "Raise high the torch of the Cordillera martyrs! Strengthen the people's struggle against national oppression and imperialist globalization!"

This year's CD is also historic because it coincides with the 20th anniversary of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) which has led the struggle of the Cordillera people since then. The CPA also leads the annual celebrations of Cordillera Day.

This year, the celebration was also held in one of the *ili* along the Chico River that stood up against the Chico Dam projects. This has brought to the fore the fact that up to now, the reactionary ruling classes and state are still trying to seize the natural resources and wealth of the Cordillera like the Chico River even as they neglect, exploit and oppress the people of the *ili*.

In previous years, the CD was held in various *ili* to show the firm unity of the national minorities and people of the Cordillera and to feature the issues they confront such as the plunder perpetrated by gigantic mining companies, militarization, the seizure of ancestral lands and resources, government's denial of basic social services to the people, and the destruction wrought by "globalization" on agriculture and the people's livelihood.



More than being just a happy commemorative gathering, Cordillera Day is a vast classroom and a reverberating political statement by the militant mass movement in the Cordillera on existing realities—the onerous problems and the persistent struggle waged by the people in the region. In a span of three days from April 22 up to Cordillera Day itself, everyone who attended CD studied the various burning issues in the Cordillera through workshops. They shared their experiences and views on militarization, "globalization" (especially in agriculture), destructive projects, human rights violations, tribal wars and the military's intrigues to foment them, and many others. From the results of the workshops, they formed resolutions to firmly cooperate and advance struggles on the various issues in the Cordillera. Messages from the CPA and allied organizations and even from certain government representatives were read.

The participants honored the Cordillerans' selflessness in laying down their lives, property, strength, talents and wealth to advance the struggle and defend their land, life, livelihood and

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TENS OF THOUSANDS OF WORKERS NATIONWIDE COMMEMORATE INTERNATIONAL LABOR DAY

A big insult! This was how workers reacted to Gloria Arroyo's Labor Day offer of free rides on the MRT, a concert, tickets to a basketball game, and discounts in various stores. Instead of becoming elated, tens of thousands of workers marched to plazas, streets and public places on May 1 to demand a P125 increase in daily wages and a stop to the regime's anti-labor policies. Their actions also coincided with the coordinated "miting de abanse" of the Anakpawis party in

various parts of the country.

In Metro Manila, up to 30,000 workers gathered at the Liwasang Bonifacio.

While Arroyo was busy prettifying her image before a number of workers in Laguna, 5,000 workers gathered in Calamba City, Laguna to assail her policies. Similar mobilizations also took place in other cities in Luzon. Up to 40,000 workers participated in protest actions in the entire Visayas. Thousands also responded to the call of Kilusang

Mayo Uno and Anakpawis in Mindanao.

The Arroyo regime refuses to address the workers' just demands. Throughout Arroyo's term, workers received not a single centavo in wage hikes. Despite the wage freeze, prices of basic goods and services continually went up. According to a study conducted by the workers, the real value of their wages has already fallen by P51.80 since 1999. This means that the current P280 minimum wage is now worth a mere P229.

5 firearms seized in Negros Oriental raid

A four-strong commando unit of the New People's Army seized three M16s, an M14 and two .45 caliber pistols in an attack on a Philippine National Police detachment in Barangay Masulog, Canlaon City, Negros Oriental in the early morning of May 5.

The offensive was carried out despite the deployment of additional military and police forces in the island.

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resources. They paid the highest tribute to the martyrs and heroes who pioneered the struggle of the Cordillera people.

To the sound of gongs and echoes of indigenous songs and chants, the participants called to mind more than a quarter-century of blood, sweat and sacrifice by the people and martyrs and pledged to carry on the torch of the martyrs and heroes of the national minorities. They also reaffirmed that as long as the national minorities do not enjoy genuine autonomy and the right to self-determination, the struggle of the Cordillera people will continue. **AB**

Misamis Occidental folk demand pullout of 10th IB

RESIDENTS of Misamis Occidental demanded the pullout of abusive troops of the Philippine Army 10th IB led by a Lt. Col. Libertino.

They put forth their demands in a meeting on April 19 in Barangay Lower Bautista, Sapang Dalaga attended by 100 peasant leaders from eight barrios. Peasants from the villages of Lower Bautista, Masubong, San Agustin, Ventura, Guinabot, Dapacan, Alto, Siloy and Bonifacio disclosed their terrible experiences when the 10th IB conducted pursuit operations against an NPA unit it had an encounter with on March 14.

Soldiers of "B" Coy ransacked, destroyed property and terrorized the barrios. The peasants complained that the soldiers stole their farm animals and other property.

One peasant was being forced but refused to serve as a guide for military operations. Four soldiers pointed their guns at another peasant who was being forced to surrender his M14 rifle because he was supposedly an NPA member.

KARAPATAN-Western Mindanao conveyed their complaints to the 10th IB command, but the abuses were denied by an official by the name of Capt. Toraino. This enraged the victims no end.

Meanwhile, in Compostela Valley, relatives demanded the immediate release of Jordan Donillo, 32, of Barangay Cabuyuan, and Rexan Esperanza, 17, of Barangay New Leyte, both from the town of Mabini. The two were accosted by troops of the 60th IB "C" Coy on April 25 in Sitio Palawan, Barangay Magpalusong, Mabini.

The 60th IB imprisoned them and brings them along during operations. According to 60th IB chief Col. Edgardo Gonzales, the detainees will be released only if they promise not to return to the armed movement. The relatives said that the detainees bore torture marks on their bodies.

Torture by British and American soldiers in Iraq exposed

OCCUPATION troops in Iraq were stripped of their pretenses anew with the exposé of the cruel acts of torture, lasciviousness and humiliation perpetrated by British and American soldiers on Iraqi prisoners.

A television presentation on April 28 of pictures of Iraqi prisoners being tortured by American soldiers at the Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad drew widespread condemnation from the American people and especially from Iraqis and other Arabs. One photograph shows a detainee standing naked on a box with his head covered by a hood and his hands tied with wire. Another picture shows several naked Iraqi prisoners piled on top of each other and being ridiculed by male and female American soldiers. It was the American soldiers themselves who took the photographs.

Meanwhile, two soldiers from the Queen's Lancashire Regiment of the British Army gave pictures to the *Daily Mirror*, a London newspaper, showing abuses committed by British troops against Iraqi prisoners. One

photograph shows a British soldier urinating on an Iraqi detainee. The two British soldiers said that it was a common practice among their fellow soldiers in Iraq to swap photographs of prisoners they had abused.

It will be remembered that last January, the maltreatment of eight Iraqi prisoners in the hands of British soldiers was exposed. The soldiers kicked the detainees several times, leading to the death of one of the prisoners. One report states that up to 25 detainees have died in various prisons in Iraq and Afghanistan controlled by the US-led occupation forces.

The dozens of photographs were shown on several other television stations and printed in many other newspapers worldwide. There are growing calls for the abuses to be classified as war crimes and for an investigation by independent human rights organizations.

The US and UK have thus been compelled to investigate. A probe by the US military confirmed widespread cases of beatings, video- and picture-taking of male and female detainees who had been

stripped naked, forcing detainees to engage in various lascivious acts, rape and other sexual abuses committed against prisoners as well as other brutal acts. Pres. George W. Bush and other US government and military officials have also been compelled to address Arab countries in an apparent bid to rationalize the incidents. Instead of asking for an apology, however, Bush expressed full confidence in American military officers whom he claimed were a big help to the Iraqi people.

Despite the gravity of the human rights violations committed, Gen. Janis Karpinsky who was then the administrator of US prisons in Iraq, was merely given an admonition. Six Military Police personnel found to have tortured Iraqi prisoners were merely reprimanded. None of them has been dismissed or forced to resign. Gen. Karpinski, who has admitted to being aware of the abuses since last year, said that she could not countenance them. She said that the torture was ordered by military intelligence officers who controlled the detention cells where the abuses occurred.

Opposition to US Patriot Act grows

THERE is growing opposition to the US Patriot Act even as Pres. George W. Bush has campaigned to make the law permanently binding. Some 300 local government units are now opposed to the Act, according to the latest reports from the Bill of Rights Defense Committee and the American Civil Liberties Union.

The latest local government

unit to pass a resolution against the Patriot Act was Martha's Vineyard in Tisbury, Massachusetts. Prior to this, the states of Alaska, Hawaii, Maine and Vermont, the cities of Philadelphia, Baltimore, Detroit, Dallas, Denver, San Jose, Seattle, San Francisco, Milwaukee, Washington D.C., Pittsburgh and El Paso and the

three most populous cities of New York, Los Angeles and Chicago had already expressed their opposition.

These local government units strongly condemn the overweening power granted by the US Patriot Act to the Department of Justice to arrest, detain and deport aliens without filing any case against them.